

SOCIAL ACTION NEWSLETTER

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NATIONAL RURAL CHURCH CONVOCATION, SEPTEMBER 6-8

A National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country, under the auspices of the Committee on Town and Country of the Home Missions Council of N.A. and the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America is announced to be held in Columbus, Ohio, Sept. 6-8, 1943. Headquarters will be in the Deshler-Wallick Hotel, sessions will be held at the King Ave. Methodist Church.

The convocation is being arranged for ministers and lay people in town and country churches, religious educators, editors, farm and rural community organizations, officials of governmental agencies, etc., in order to bring the religious life of town and country into more direct relation with community affairs and to strengthen the town and country church for its work in the war- and post-war world.

The convocation will open at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, September 6, though the various commissions will meet at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. on that and each succeeding day. At the opening session addresses will be delivered by Henry St. George Tucker, Presiding Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church and President of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, and by the Honorable Claude Wickard, Secretary of Agriculture. The latter has been invited but final acceptance has not yet been given.

The following commissions will carry the work of the convocation:

1. The Church and Agricultural Reconstruction
2. The Rural Church and Land Tenure
3. The Church and the Farm Laborer and Share-cropper
4. The Church and Rural Community Agencies
5. Church Cooperation in the Rural Community
6. The Theological Seminary and the Rural Church
7. The Agricultural College and the Rural Church
8. The Church College and the Rural Church
9. The Rural Church and Its Pastoral Function
10. The Techniques of Rural Church Extension
11. Religious Education
12. The Rural Church and Agricultural Missions
13. The Rural Church and Minority Peoples
14. Financing the Church in Town and Country
15. The Town and Country Church Building
16. Urban-Rural Relations

Preliminary announcements indicate that Hotel accommodations can be secured from \$1.50 per day (4 persons to a room) up. Further information can be secured from the Ohio Council of Churches, 44 East Broad Street, Columbus, or from Benson Y. Landis, secretary, 297 Fourth Ave. New York.

DISCIPLES FORM COMMISSION ON POST WAR WORLD ORDER

The board of trustees of The United Christian Missionary Society at its meeting in Indianapolis on June 22-23 took action to join President C.E. Lemmon of the International Convention in setting up a Commission on World Order which will act jointly for the International Convention and the departments of social welfare and rural work and religious education of the Society. The trustees also voted the sum of \$5000 to underwrite the work of the Commission.

The purpose of the Commission will be to represent the Disciples of Christ in cooperative efforts among the churches to bring about a just and durable peace and acquaint our people and our churches with the various proposals for post-war world order. The Commission will work closely with the Commission on the Bases of a Just and Durable Peace set up a year ago by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America and will take an active part in the National Christian Mission on World Order which will visit 75-100 cities under the auspices of that organization this fall. It will also cooperate in the Des Moines conference scheduled for this winter and will cooperate with the Division of Christian Education in its 'Vital Issues Campaign' planned for the fall months. It will also hold conferences on world order in various parts of the brotherhood in an effort to bring to our churches and our people an understanding of the factors involved in a just and permanent peace. The Commission on Post-War World Order will be in a very important sense to the post-war era what the Committee on War Services is to the present war period. That committee is serving our churches, our people, and our men in the armed services in time of war. The Commission will attempt to render the same type of service in preparation for peace and for world order that will make peace just and permanent.

The personnel nominated for membership on the Commission is as follows:

Roger T. Nooe	Wm. A. Shullenberger
Raphael Harwood Miller	Miss Genevieve Brown
George Walker Buckner, Jr.	C. E. Lemmon
Mrs. Clarence Hamilton	M. Owen Kellison
Mrs. H. B. McCormick	Harold L. Lunger
James A. Crain	Miss Bertha Park
Mrs. John L. H. Fuller	Lin D. Cartwright
M. Searle Bates	Mrs. Kenneth B. Bowen
Franklin Minck	John L. Davis

Henry Gadd Harmon

Mrs. Mary Roberts Crowley

BEAUMONT, LOS ANGELES AND DETROIT ARE WARNINGS

In November 1942, Social Action Newsletter warned that race relations in the U.S. were rapidly deteriorating and enumerated an increasing number of incidents of a character calculated to cause trouble if not remedied. Within the past month these warnings have been underwritten by serious racial clashes in Beaumont, Texas, where troops had to be called into restore order; Los Angeles, where the troops themselves were involved in the rioting, and Detroit, where race hatred again flamed into bloodshed and federal troops had to be called to restore order and protect war production. The evidence is overwhelming that unless the people - the people of local communities, the common people who make America what it is - take a vigorous stand for law and order and compel duly authorized officials of government - municipal, state, and federal - to enforce the law impartially and with equal justice for all we are in for serious trouble.

How little sense there is to these disgraceful procedures is evidenced by the Beaumont riot, where 3,000 shipyard workers dropped their tools to march to the city hall on the false report that a Negro was held there who had raped a white woman. (Time June 28) The mob, unsatisfied, turned to the Negro district where riot and bloodshed occurred. Turning up at the county courthouse they were met by a determined public official in the person of Sheriff Bill Richardson who, armed with a .45 revolver and a 'tommy-gun' told the mob, "I haven't any such man.... Now get back to building ships where you ought to be." But before they met this officer of the law, one white man and one Negro were dead and 50 were suffering from injuries.

Responsibility for the so-called "Zoot-Suit" riots in Los Angeles was laid squarely at the door of Los Angeles newspapers, particularly the Hearst Examiner and Herald & Express, Los Angeles city police, and Army and Navy officials by Time (June 21). Trouble began when service men-soldiers and sailors undertook to visit retaliation upon gangs of young Mexican boys who affect the extreme form of dress known as 'zoot-suit' after a number of soldiers and sailors had been beaten and robbed by these gangs. Men in uniform toured the Mexican district, beating up young Mexicans without regard to whether they were 'zoot-suiters' or not. After two days the trouble seemed to be ebbing, though Time charges that police officers accompanied the mob in squad cars, watched the beatings, and then jailed the victims. It was then that the Hearst papers and the Los Angeles Times got in their work. Provocative headlines indicating that young Mexican gangsters were threatening Los Angeles police incited violence in earnest. The night following these stories scores of cars filled with soldiers and sailors poured into the downtown section adjacent to the Mexican district. The mob crashed into downtown theatres, beating up every Mexican or dark complexioned male discovered. Also, Mexicans were being beaten on the streets. Says Time, "The mood of officialdom (the Shore Patrol, the Military Police, the city police, the sheriff's office) seemed complaisant.... (Police) orders apparently were to let the Shore Patrol and the Military Police handle the rioting sailors.

(Continued on page 4)

PEARL BUCK HEADS NEW RACE RELATIONS CONFERENCE

Elsewhere in this issue is a review of the recent race riots in Beaumont, Los Angeles, and Detroit. It is peculiarly gratifying to read the announcement in Civil Liberties Union Quarterly that its Committee Against Race Discrimination, under the chairmanship of Pearl Buck, famous novelist, is launching a National Conference for Better Race Relations under the auspices of her committee. With a nucleus of 26 national organizations, a continuing conference for counsel and action will be maintained for common effort in six major aspects of race discrimination in the war effort: discrimination in the armed forces, in government employment, in voluntary services, in industry, in public housing, and in service and industrial training. The conference will tackle as its first task problems of discriminations against Negroes, though attention will be given to discriminations against other minority racial groups. Plans include ways by which practical cooperation can be carried on between member organizations in key cities, especially where there are branches of these member organizations to take the lead.

Among those associated with Mrs. Buck in the enterprise are a number of well-known religious leaders.

Equally encouraging and offering better opportunity to the average Christian to do something about the racial problem in his own local community is the proposal of the Department of Race Relations of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America to recruit people of different walks of life and of different races in local communities; first, to become active workers instead of passive spectators in their own local situation; second, to help the community to become informed on matters relating to Christians of different races living together as friends and neighbors; and third, to work with others to develop interracial understanding in the local community.

Each person enlisting is asked to make the following commitment:

"Believing that Christianity today faces one of its greatest challenges through race prejudice and that the love and justice expressed in the teachings, life and work of Jesus Christ are the most effective means of dealing with problems between racial groups, and

"Believing that this power of Christ can be effective through my service and my loyalty to Him as I come in contact with others in my work, my home, my church and my community, I hereby declare my decision:

"To act positively and constructively wherever racial tensions can be corrected and interracial goodwill and justice advanced.

"To seek a fellowship with others who are like-minded and to work with them wherever mutually agreeable.

"To become informed about the facts of race relations, especially the phases that effect me and others of my community in our daily living.

"To seek Divine guidance and vision for carrying out these intentions."

Peachtree Christian Church, Atlanta, Ga., operates a day nursery school as its contribution to the war on juvenile delinquency. Pastor Robert Burns reports that some mothers who work in war industries travel 8-10 miles each morning and evening by street-car to leave their children in the school. The unusual location of the church in a deep ravine that has been terraced provides a playground safe from traffic hazards and provides something of the same surroundings as a country day-school.

On Monday, June 7, the Supreme Court handed down a decision upholding an order of the National Labor Relations Board directing the Virginia Electric & Power Co., to reimburse its employees for approximately \$90,000 collected as dues for a defunct union which the NLRB found to be company-dominated. The union has been in operation for 5 years, but when the case was brought to the attention of the NLRB investigation revealed that it was under the thumb of the company. Suit resulted in a Supreme Court order that the company return to the employees all dues that has been collected.

Early in February the Tennessee legislature after bitter debate and at the demand of Governor Prentiss Cooper passed a bill repealing the state's 50-year-old poll tax law. Opposition to repeal was led by a rural politician generally regarded as a spokesman for influential political groups which did not care to come out in the open on the issue. On May 7, the repeal bill was held unconstitutional by a Tennessee lower court, which held that payment of poll tax is required by the state constitution and can be abolished only by constitutional amendment. Appeal will be taken to the Tennessee Supreme Court. It should be noted that other states, such as Indiana, have a poll tax but do not make the payment of poll tax a prerequisite for voting.

Meanwhile the anti-poll tax bill has again passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 265 to 110. In the last session of Congress after passing the House it was defeated by a filibuster in the Senate. As the measure again goes to the Senate threats of filibuster continue, though the session is still young and an extended filibuster would test the vocal capacities of even Senator ("The Man") Bilbo of Mississippi, who is one of the most vociferous and uncompromising defenders of taxing the right of citizens to vote. It may seriously be questioned if democratic processes are not greatly harmed by an out-worn rule that permits one man to delay, and sometimes completely frustrate, the will of the people simply by the device of getting the floor and holding it in the face of all opposition, resorting to the trick of reading all sorts of unrelated and frequently trivial matter into the record until his opponents either surrender or the session comes to an end. A good beginning toward reform would be to adopt a rule requiring the filibusterer to surrender the floor when the Senate by vote declares that his remarks are no longer related to the legislation pending. Persons interested in helping to secure favorable Senate action may write their Senators urging support of the measure and to the National Federation for Constitutional Liberties, 1400 L Street, Northwest, Washington, D.C. Eternal vigilance is still the price of liberty.

The board of trustees of The United Christian Missionary Society at its regular meeting in Indianapolis on June 22-23 adopted a resolution upon the recommendation of the cabinet of employed officers of the Society, protesting statements emanating from the Dies Committee regarding the resettlement of Japanese now in War Relocation camps as "contrary to fact, biased in their generalizations and entirely misleading to the public" and urging that appropriations for the committee be discontinued and the committee itself dissolved. The resolution also defended the Federal Bureau of Investigation, attacked by the Dies Committee for its work in relocating American citizens of Japanese ancestry and loyal Japanese nationals, declaring that the FBI has followed "a clear and unprejudiced procedure in investigation of individual cases" of Japanese recommended for resettlement. The text of the resolution follows:

"Whereas, recent reports of the Dies Committee of the House of Representatives have contained many statements concerning the Japanese in this country which members of our staff know from personal first hand knowledge are contrary to fact, biased in their generalizations and entirely misleading to the public; and

"Whereas, these reports have indicted the policies and practices of the Federal Bureau of Investigation which we believe has followed a clear and unprejudiced procedure in investigation of individual cases; and

"Whereas, by increasing the existing unjust attitudes of uninformed people and by creating new unwarranted animosity these reports are interfering with the purposes of the Government in resettling loyal Japanese in civil life and occupation.

"Now Therefore Be It Resolved, that we protest such activity on the part of the Dies Committee as a threat to the democratic spirit of America.

"Be It Further Resolved, that we recommend that appropriations for this committee be discontinued and the committee itself dissolved and that investigation and resettlement of the Japanese be left in the hands of the duly constituted authorities within the administrative branch of the Government.

"Be It Further Resolved, that a copy of this resolution be sent by the Secretary of the Corporation to the Speaker of the House, Chairman, and members of the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and to the Honorable Louis Ludlow, representative of the Eleventh District, Indiana, in the House of Representatives."

For 5 years the Dies Committee has been under fire from many quarters. Most frequent charge is that the committee is careless in the type of testimony which it accepts and puts into the record, that charges of the most serious character are given publicity without substantiation and that frequently accused persons are not given an opportunity to appear, face their accusers, or cross-examine witnesses. The recent 2 year extension of the committee and the \$75,000 appropriation provided for it was accomplished by 'behind the scenes' methods that have brought further criticism upon the committee and its chairman. Rep. Jerry Voorhis of Calif. a member of the committee, sharply criticised the methods used and opposed continuance.

The service police were futile.... California's zoot-suit war was a shameful example of what happens to war-time emotions without war-time discipline.... The military authorities were notably lax (all shore and camp leave could easily have been cancelled), the Los Angeles police apparently looked the other way. The press, with the exception of the Daily News and the Hollywood Citizen-News, helped whip up the mob spirit. And Los-Angeles, apparently unaware that it was spawning the ugliest brand of mob action since the coolie race riots of the 1870s, gave its tacit approval."

The Detroit riots in June were more serious because the underlying causes were deeper and the effects more widespread. Back of it lies the mushroom growth of the Michigan industrial centers since World War I made it the automobile capitol of the nation. Crowding into its slums and segregated districts a polyglot population that offers every opportunity for crooked politicians to build corrupt political machines to secure and maintain control of its many foreign language areas, lack of decent housing, labor disturbances, vice, crime, and nearly every other concomitant of social maladjustment. Detroit is today 'dynamite,' ready to explode at the slightest concussion. In the 20s it was the happy hunting ground for the Klan. In the 30s it was the locale of the "Black Dragon" organizations. Then it was Father Coughlin and his weekly tirades of bitterness and hate. Lately it has been the Rev. J. Frank Norris, formerly of Fort Worth, Texas, and Gerald L. K. Smith, former Disciple minister and henchman of the late Huey Long. Two weeks before the rioting began R.J. Thomas, president of the UAW-CIO, warned that the Ku Klux Klan was fomenting trouble. Then it came suddenly on a Sunday night, June 20, at Belle Isle Park. A fight between a Negro and a white - no more than that. But for 24 hours mob rule was supreme in Detroit's downtown Negro district and even overflowed into swank Woodward Ave. Before it ended the Governor had put 1000 state troops and 500 state police into action. Finally he appealed to the President, who sent federal troops into the city. Three counties were put in a "state of emergency," and all bars and restaurants were closed, and a 10 p.m. curfew established. "The worst race riot in modern U.S. history resulted in 28 dead (23 Negroes); 800 injured (the vast majority Negroes), and 1300 arrested (90% Negroes). The National Federation for Constitutional Liberties sent its chairman, George Marshall and its executive secretary, Milton Kemnitz, to Detroit as soon as the rioting broke out. Their report charges:

"The heavy suffering by the Negro people during this violence was the result of a policy of collusion with anti-Negro mobsters by the Detroit police. Most of the deaths are the result of police shooting of Negroes. The continuance of the violence until federal troops intervened is charged to a failure and refusal of the mayor and city administration to act against the instigators. Order was restored only after the President, following an appeal from the Governor, termed the violence insurrection and sent in federal troops to put it down." Against this ugly, sinister thing all America must battle. The movements fostered by Pearl Buck and the Federal Council noted elsewhere in this issue have not come too soon. The danger is that they may have come too late.

HAZEL GREEN WORK CAMP OPENS AUSPICIOUSLY

The Work Camp at Hazel Green Academy, Hazel Green, Kentucky under the joint sponsorship of the Department of Social Welfare and the American Friends Service Committee opened on June 18 under most favorable circumstances. Originally planned for 12 campers and 3 staff people, the camp opened with 15 campers and 3 staff members. Nine states and Mexico are represented among the campers, two young men having come from Mexico City to join the group.

The campers are living in the Academy buildings and are assisting with the gardening and in canning of vegetables and fruits for the use of the school. But the major work task of the camp will be the rehabilitation of a number of mountain schoolhouses, some of which have stood for 50 years with little or not repair save what the teacher could make herself. Henry A. Stovall, principal of Hazel Green, writing of the camp says, "The spirit of the group is excellent, the fellowship is cordial and wholesome, the energy and talents displayed seem inexhaustible. Their first week of work finds one dilapidated schoolhouse reconditioned from foundation to chimney top, including painting of interior and exterior. Today they begin to completely reroof a schoolhouse.... The group has helped us can beans, beets, etc., and we are arranging to work cooperatively in entertaining the young people's conference.... We are indeed happy to have the Work Camp Group on our campus and hope it may become a permanent project with us."

MISSIONARY SECRETARY FINDS NEWSLETTER VALUABLE

For some time Miss Allena Grafton, missionary organizations-education state secretary for Southern California has been sending Social Action Newsletter to each local president in her area. We are in receipt of the following statement from Miss Grafton:

"The Woman's Board of Southern California has subscribed to Social Action Newsletter for the last 2 years. Recently a questionnaire was sent to these organizations to determine whether or not we should continue to invest our money in this way. We are happy to state that 90% of our presidents report that items from the Newsletter are being used at either group or assembly meetings. They asked that we continue the service."

SECTION 562 P. L. & R.

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